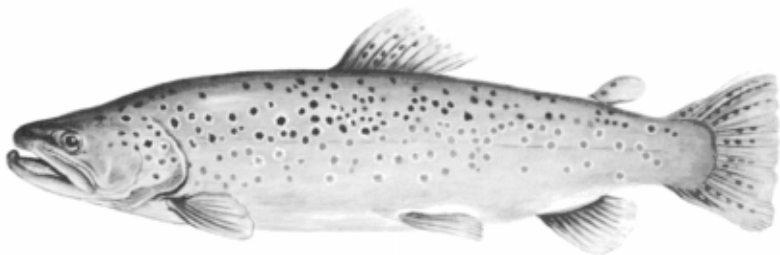


## BROWN TROUT

*Salmo trutta*



### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The coloration of brown trout is quite variable; usually they are dark brown or olive brown on the back, shading to golden brown on the sides and to white or yellow on the belly.

There are dark spots on the head, body, and dorsal fin. These spots are relatively large and distinct. There are no wavy markings on the back or dorsal fin.

There are red spots on the lower sides, each surrounded by a light halo. There is a great deal of variation in the number and size of the dark and the red spots in the brown trout of California, *but this is the only trout with both black and red spots on its body.*

Some brown trout from lakes are very pale, almost silvery, on their sides and belly. "Sea-run" browns returning to certain rivers from the ocean are quite silvery, resembling steelhead, and may be without red spots.

The scales are large enough to be seen easily, though in very large individuals they may become imbedded in the skin.

The brown trout in the illustration above is a very heavy old male. In such fish the posterior part of the body is very deep, and the lower jaw is hooked. Younger fish are much different in body proportions. (See illustration, page 41.)

### DISTRIBUTION IN CALIFORNIA

The brown trout is widely scattered throughout California. However, the waters in which it is abundant are relatively few. In past years this species was planted in a large part of all the trout waters of the State, but in recent years only a few selected lakes and streams have been stocked with browns. A few browns, progeny of earlier plants, can still be found in many lakes, reservoirs, and streams in California, and in a good many streams along both sides of the Sierra the "brownie" spawns quite successfully.

## INTERESTING FACTS

A characteristic of the brown trout is its wariness, and those who can catch the brownie rate him as a “fisherman’s fish”. The strain of brown trout brought to California many years ago never lost its canny Scotch disposition, but another strain imported from Massachusetts in 1954 apparently had some of its wariness bred out through the years and is much easier for the average angler to catch.

Because of his disposition, the brownie escapes his enemies and often lives to a ripe old age. He also grows to a considerable size and record trout caught from time to time are usually browns.

This trout was originally described in 1758 from native European fish by the great naturalist Linnaeus. The specific name *trutta* is the Latin for “trout”.



*These large brown trout were netted by Department of Fish and Game personnel out of Convict Lake, Mono County, on November 3, 1953. This was done to reduce cannibalism and give the other trout a better chance to survive.—Photo by Phil Pister.*